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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this book is to help designers and teachers think about the quality of outside school environments as learning places. The first chapter defines the players' roles as: (1) the designer, a maker of school form; (2) the teacher, the maintainer of the environment; and (3) the child, who is a major force in the use of the space. These players, their roles, and their interactions are described, along with the forces that shape the players' interactions. Chapter 2 places the players in a setting and, by describing the dimensions of this setting, explores a common vocabulary. The nine pairs of contrasting elements essential in any play environment are also introduced. Chapter 3 describes the process of development of outside space in two schools over an 80-year time span, and Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the process of finding a fit or congruence between a physical setting and the users of the setting. Chapter 5 describes four design elements and summarizes their implications via case studies. Chapter 6 focuses on adults and research into the variety of educational settings and adult responses to them. The final chapter focuses on the potential of outside spaces to be safe settings for learning. Contains about 180 references. (SD)

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